

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #57]

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INTERVIEW

WITH

VITO CACCIOLA

by

Merton R. Lovett

“As Well as Remembered.”

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(from memory)

“I hava for you good news today. Whata you think, Mr. Lovett?

“No, I buya me de new machine. It is a wonderful. It costa \$650.00.

“Oh, I change my mind. De second hand machine I will not trusta. De Bible saya never to puta new wine in old bottles.

“It is ship-ed here from Missouri. It hava many marvelous improvements.

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"No, I doa no business with do United Shoe Machinery. They will not sella their machines. Every month de cobbler must paya to them rent. If he hava no business some months, he must paya to them five dollars, just de same. That is de minimim.

"De old machine, it is twenty eight years of age. It hasa paid for itself.

"No, for many years I owned no machines. All de work I must doa by hand. I had learn-ed de business in the Old Country.

"My first shop? It was over there, where de barber now is.

"For some time then I hava very little business. But I tella de Sicilians I needa work. Soon I geta it.

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"No! I did not then liva in my shop. I boarda. I liv-ed first with Scandolfi.

"I only boarda there for one week. One night I geta angry. We was eata de supper. Joseph Scandolfi, who was biga boy, giva to me insult. He saya, 'Mother, does we maka de new style? Is it now de custom for servant to eata with de master?'

"My blood geta hot. I feela like two cents. When everybodys is asleep, I taka my suitcase and sneaks away from there. I finds de better boarding house.

"Mrs, Scandolfi, she coma to de shop and aska questions. She ask-ed, 'Vito, why did you runna away from my house? We hava no bugs. Does you not lika de spahgetti what I cooka?'

"I tella her that I does not wants to be disgrac-ed. 'I am nota your servant. Mrs. Scandolfi,' I saya, 'you are my servant. I am de guest. Did I not giva to you two dollars for one week's board?'"

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"De new machine, it will keepa my nose to de grindstone for a year. Thanks be, I could maka de good down payment. If de salesman did not cheata me, I would owns it quicker.

"Sure, that salesman is de crooker. He talka good. For many years I trusta him. I giva him all my orders for leather and supplies.

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"How does I know he doa wrong? Another salesman tella me. He saya, 'Vito, Fabri will geta \$65.00 commission when he sella de machine. If you had buy-ed de machine from me it would costa you no more, but I would giva you also sixty five dollars worth of leather.'

"Yes, I hava scold-ed that rascal, Fabri. I talk to him lika Mussolini's Bible.

"You does not know Mussolini's Bible? That Bible says, 'Do so; — or else.' I tella Fabri he must maka me present, or else I will trade with him no more.

"He does not maka answer yet. If he does not doa right, I will crossa him from my books.

"Hello, Mrs. Brown, I does not seea you for long time.

"Yes, I will fixa de heels while you waita. No wonder you hava aches in de feet. I thinka it is marvelous you does not tripa and breaka your leg. Resta your feet on this paper and keepa them clean.

"How is Mr. Brown? He does not coma in to playa music any more.

"It is de shame, Mrs. Brown. Some mens lika de saloon better.

"If I hada de baby, I would spenda my nights at home. I lova babies much. Perhaps that is why I never hava none.

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“De saloons make to peoples bada promises. They hava music too. They offers many of de enticements. They tempta much, but leada peoples to destruction.

“De enticements of saloon maka me think of de story about pigs, Mrs. Brown.

“It goa like this. In Italy once was a farmer who buya many pigs. He was far from home, so a man aska him, ‘Friend how can you geta so many pigs to your home. They is a stupid. You cannot driva them so far. You cannot leada them.’

“De farmer maka answer so. ‘I will taka them first to de slaughter house. Then I will taka home sausage and de lard and de bacon.’

“‘But,’ de man argued, ‘de slaughter house is also three miles distant. When you geta there de most of your pigs will have runn-ed away.’

“‘Oh, leava that to me,’ replya de farmer. Then he taka from his cart de big bag of burlap. He opena it. Inside are many beans. With his hands he taka out some and spreada them on ground lika this.

“Then he spread some more ahead in de road. De pigs is dumba and greedy. They eata de beans and follow de farmer, who sometimes give them more beans.

“Sure, all de pigs reacha de gate by de slaughter house.

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De farmer opena de door. Inside he throws some more beans. Be pigs marcha in. Then de farmer laughs, ‘HAh, hah!’ Now the pigs, they is mosta dead.

“Yes, Mrs. Brown, I thinka de story has de motto for your husband. Does you not?”

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"Do you remember Dr. Carr, de dentist? He is de finer doctor. He is also de true Christian and de friend to me.

"Recently Dr. Carr is very sicka. He hava de operation at de hospital.

"One day I go to calla on him. Often I visita de hospital. I taka courage and goods cheer to sick peoples.

"Yes, I seea Dr. Carr. He is in de private room. I smila and ask-ed, 'Does you wisha me to pray for you doctor?'

"He consenta, so I aska, 'Shall I pray for you loud or with silence.'

"He saya, 'Pray for me loud, Vito. I needa God's help!'

"After de prayer he is a more cheerful. It was de good visit.

"How can I praya so good in public? It is because I hava de rightousness in de heart. If de bottle is full of whiskey, only whiskey will flowa out. If it is fulla of water, from it water will coma. So it is with de heart. If peoples hava evil in de heart, it is evil what they throwa up. If de heart is a crowd-ed with good thoughts, they also will flowa from de mouth."

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